

REMARKS

Claim 1-12 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Racich et al., U.S. Patent Number 4,591,512, of record (hereafter Racich) in view of Nakane et al., U.S. Patent Number 5,374,972, of record (hereafter Nakane). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Nakane discloses a photographic processing system in which photographic papers, which are each subjected respectively to photographic printing exposure, are distributed to a line or a plurality of lines and conveyed to a developing device so as to effectively carry out photographic processing. See Nakane, Col. 1, lines 5-11. Nakane discloses a “photographic distribution device by which a plurality of lines of small size photographic papers are conveyed into an automatic developing device for large size photographic papers.” See Nakane, Col. 2, lines 41-46.

Racich discloses a method of making high efficiency visible range dichroic polarizer material comprising the steps of staining a uniaxially stretched sheet of polyvinyl alcohol by immersing it in an iodine bath and further stretching the stained sheet in substantially the same direction while it is being treated with a borating solution containing a zinc salt. See Racich, Col. 1, lines 53-58. It is acknowledged in the Office Action that Racich does not disclose a

plurality of films being dipped simultaneously into at least one processing liquid, without contacting each other. See Office Action, page 3.

According to the Examiner, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of Racich to include the disclosure of Nakane, so that a plurality of films are dipped simultaneously into at least one processing liquid without contacting each other, for the purposes of conserving processing time and liquids. See Office Action, page 4.

However, one of ordinary skill in the art would not find it obvious to combine the disclosure of Norma with Racich because Norma discloses an automatic film feeder for an automatic developer related to a technique of developing films and Racich is related to polarizer technology.

As with Norma, the photographic process disclosed by Nakane may not be combined with Racich due to the difference in technology. Nakane discloses a technique of developing films. This is similar to the type of technology disclosed by Norma. Accordingly, the Examiner's articulated reasons for combining the teachings of Racich and Nakane do not support a legal conclusion of obviousness.

The presently claimed invention is related to producing a polarizing film. Applicants respectfully hold that it is difficult to combine the disclosure of Nomura with Racich. Applicant submits that one of ordinary skill in the art would not combine the disclosure of Racich and Nakane, because the technical fields of Racich and Nakane are totally different.

Furthermore, since Nakane discloses a photographic processing system, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to subject the plurality of films to a stretching step. The Examiner cites Figure 2 of Nakane as disclosing Applicants' claimed plurality of films, each being dipped simultaneously into at least one processing liquid. See Office Action, page 4. However, the apparatus of Nakane does not appear to accomplish a stretching step. Moreover, it does not seem possible to modify the apparatus of Nakane so as to accomplish a stretching step.

Additionally, one of ordinary skill in the art would not add a stretching step to the process of Nakane because it may destroy the operability of the invention. Nakane discloses a photographic processing system. One of ordinary skill in the art would not combine a stretching and/or dyeing step to such a process because it may destroy the photos being developed.

Thus, the combined reading of Racich in view of Nakane fails to render the presently claimed invention obvious. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Claims 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Racich et al., U.S. Patent Number 4,591,512, of record (hereafter Racich) in view of Nakane et al., U.S. Patent Number 5,374,972, of record (hereafter Nakane) as applied to claims 1, 2, 4 and 10-12 above, and further in view of Kondo et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication Number 2002/0182427 Al, of record (hereafter Kondo). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Application No.: 10/573,646
Art Unit: 2872

Response under 37 C.F.R. §1.116
Attorney Docket No.: 062338

Racich in view of Nakane does not render the presently claimed invention obvious. The deficiencies of Racich in view of Nakane are not overcome by the disclosure of Kondo. Nakane is a different film technology than Racich and Kondo. One of ordinary skill in the art would have difficult combining the disclosure of Nakane with Racich and Kondo.

Thus, the combined reading of Racich in view of Nakane and further in view of Kondo fails to render the presently claimed invention obvious.

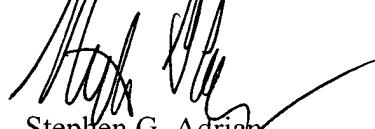
For at least the foregoing reasons, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited art and defines patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP



Stephen G. Adrian

Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 32,878
Telephone: (202) 822-1100
Facsimile: (202) 822-1111

SGA/BKM/bam